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The Islands Acquired From Denmark.

Daily Picayune.

The Treasury Bureau of Statistics has prepared a statement of information on the Danish islands, which have just come into the control of the United States through the treaty lately ratified with Denmark.

These islands are St. Thomas, St. John and St. Croix, the last being best known for the rum made there and extensively imported into the United States. These islands lie off the eastern coast of Porto Rico, and are in fact a mere extension of the marine elevation, of which Cuba, Jamaica, Haiti and Porto Rico are the principal representatives; while they also form a connection link between the Greater and the Lesser Antilles. St. Thomas, the best known of the group, lies 38 miles due east of the northeastern extremity of Porto Rico; St. John lies 12 miles east of St. Thomas, while St. Croix lies 50 miles south of St. John and St. Thomas, and 60 miles southeast of the southeastern point of Porto Rico. Two small islands already belonging to the United States, Vieques and Culebra, which were obtained through the cession of Porto Rico, lie directly between Porto Rico and this newly added group.

The islands are small, with a comparatively small producing capacity, their chief importance being by reason of their harbors which they offer and their value from a strategic as well as general commercial standpoint. St. Croix, the largest of them, is about 20 miles and from 1 to 5 miles wide, with an area of about 80 square miles, and a population of about 20,000. It is also the most productive of the islands, a considerable area being devoted to the production of sugar cane and tropical fruits, and agriculture being the occupation of a large proportion of the population. There are two towns on the island, Fredriksted, with a population of 3,600, and Christiansted, with a population of 5,500. The latter is located upon the chief harbor of the island, which, however, is choked with mud and of much less importance than the harbors of either of the other islands.

St. John, the smallest of the islands, has an area of but about 21 square miles, and a population of only about 1,000, and a comparatively small cultivable area, its chief value being in its possibilities for harbor purposes, the natural harbor of Coral bay being described as one of the best protected natural harbors in the West Indies, but at present little used.

St. Thomas, which lies nearest to Porto Rico, is by far the most important in its present availability for harbor purposes, the harbor of Charlotte Amalia having been for more than a century recognized as one of the best, if not the best natural harbor in the entire West Indian group, and having been during all that time a central point as a harbor of refuge and point of exchange for merchandise and a coaling station for vessels from all parts of the world. With passages through which it is easily reached, a good depth of water and excellent protection from the hurricanes to which that region is subject, it has long been regarded as an extremely valuable harbor, and when Denmark, in the early part of the nineteenth century, made it a free port, it became the distributing point for the commerce of the entire West Indian group. As a consequence nearly the entire population of the island is clustered around the

port of Charlotte Amalia, fully 10,000 of the 12,500 population living in this city, and less than 2,000 being engaged in agriculture.

The total area of these islands is 183 square miles, with an aggregate population of about 33,000. The population is chiefly colored, descendants of former slaves who were liberated in 1848, English being the chief language spoken, especially in the island of St. Thomas, which has been for many years a resort for vessels from English-speaking countries. These islands form a part of the eastern boundary of the Caribbean sea, and the importance of St. Thomas for a great naval station constitutes their chief value to the United States, whenever it shall become necessary for this New World power to dominate these Caribbean waters and the ship canal through the American isthmus. Now that the Great Republic has appeared in the arena of the nations as one of the most powerful of them, it becomes necessary that no movement of territorial expansion shall be taken without providing for its protection and maintenance against any possible foreign attack.

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